

REMARKS

An Office Action was mailed on July 18, 2005. Claims 1-19 are pending, of which claims 1 and 14 are the only independent claims.

By the foregoing, independent claims 1 and 14 are amended, and claim 2 is cancelled. Entry of all claim amendments is requested. No new matter is being introduced and all claims are well supported by the specification. Passage of all claims to allowance is earnestly solicited.

Claims 1-5, 8, 12-16, and 18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,794,013 to Iacovelli et al. (Iacovelli). Dependent claims 6, 7 and 17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Iacovelli in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,743,210 to Lampe (Lampe). Dependent claims 9-11 and 19 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Iacovelli.

The present invention is a pet mat configured to prevent a food or water bowl from sliding on the top surface of the pet mat. This is accomplished by configuring the pet mat to have a plurality of bumps arranged irregularly and asymmetrically on a planar upper surface. The bumps are sized and are spaced such that a bowl, when placed on the upper surface, is restrained in a plurality of non-dedicated locations.

Iacovelli does not teach, disclose or suggest the claimed pet mat. Iacovelli teaches an heavy duty vehicle floor mat as depicted in Figs. 1, 7, and 8, which are respectfully reproduced below for the convenience of the Examiner.

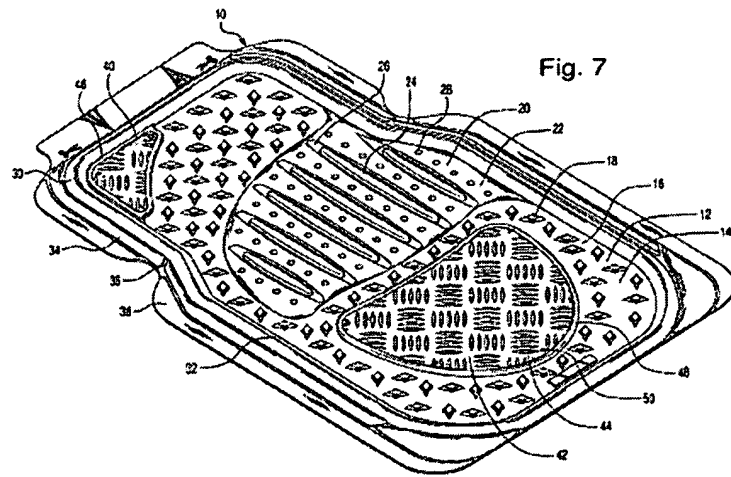
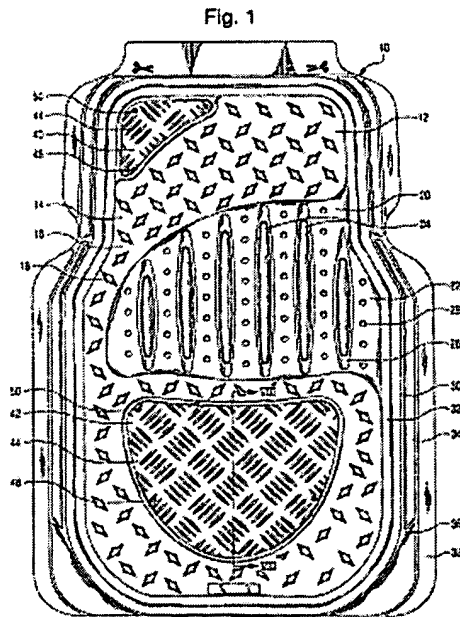
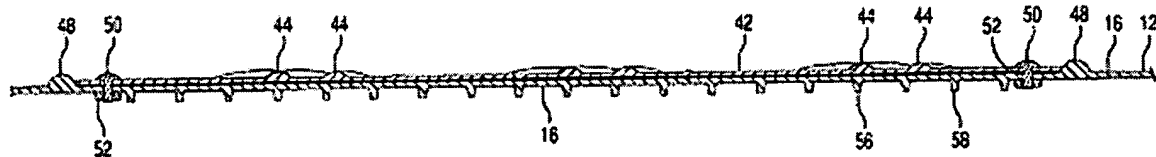


Fig. 8



Iacovelli teaches that a vehicle floor mat 10 intended “to provide a shoe traction surface and a shoe scraping surface” for workmen’s “rugged work boots, which tend to accumulate mud, moisture, and debris build-up.” 1:38-40 and 1:5-14. Thus, Iacovelli discloses four areas – a first and second area 14, 20 and metal toe and heel plates 40, 42. For the reasons indicated below the floor mat of Iacovelli does not have the claimed structure and does not retain a bowl as claimed.

Each of the four areas of Iacovelli’s vehicle floor mat is separated from adjacent areas vertically or by a wall. Although the areas have irregular shapes, the protrusions therein are not bumps and notwithstanding this are not arranged in an irregular and asymmetrical manner as claimed.

Iacovelli teaches a first area 14 that is in one aspect C-shaped and in another aspect is O-shaped. Area 14 is recessed and is covered diamond shaped protrusions 18 covering the surface area.

2:40 et al. A second area 20 is disposed vertically above area 14 and has raised longitudinal ridges 24 that are spaced from each other by rows of spaced bumps 28. 2:55 et al.

Two metallic toe plates 40 and 44 comprising crisscrossing groups of five raised ridges 44 [sic] are provided on the surface of the vehicle floor mat. Each toe plate is surrounded, as is evident in Fig. 8, by a raised surrounding wall 46, 48. 3:26 et al.

Iacovelli fails to teach, disclose, or suggest that the claimed plurality of bumps. Iacovelli discloses, in fact, only bumps 28 as bumps. Iacovelli teaches ridges and diagonal protrusions but fails to teach, disclose, or suggest bumps or bumps that are sized and spaced to restrain a bowl in a plurality of non-dedicated locations. For this reason alone, the rejection with respect to Iacovelli should be withdrawn.

Each of the plurality of protrusions, ridges, and bumps is shown in the perspective view, Fig. 7. The Examiners' attention is respectfully directed to the particular configurations. The diamond shaped protrusions 18 are arranged in grid of lines. The longitudinal ridges 24 and bumps 28 are arranged to be in an alternating transverse row. The crisscrossing groups of raised ridges 44 [sic] are very symmetrically arranged in diagonal intersecting rows in both the toe and the heel plate. Thus, none of the protrusions, ridges, and bumps are arranged as claimed, i.e. in an irregular and asymmetrical manner. For this reason alone, the rejection with respect to Iacovelli should be withdrawn.

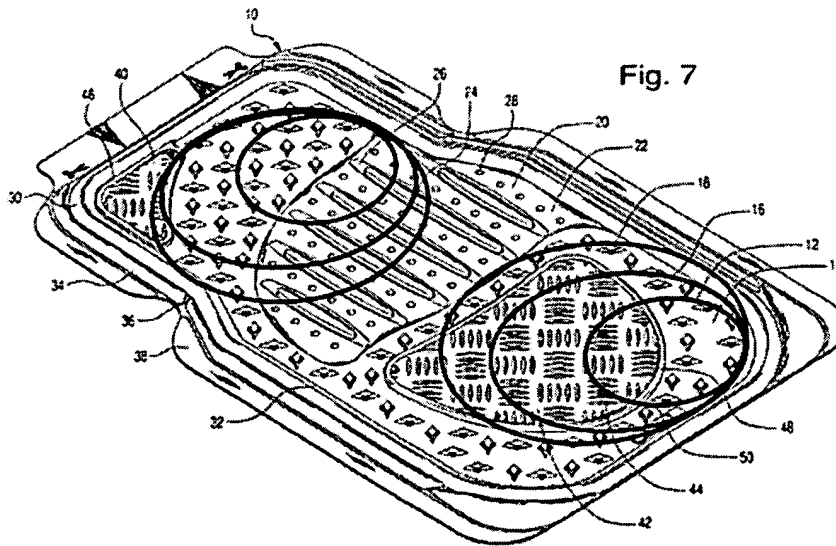
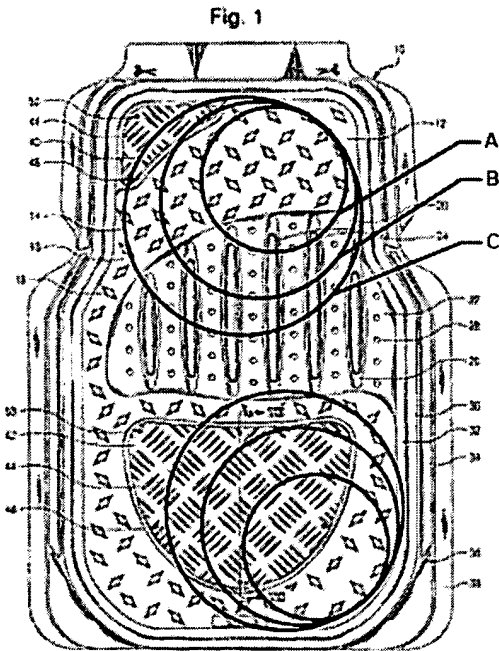
Furthermore, a bowl placed on the vehicle floor mat would not be restrained as claimed. In fact, a bowl placed on the vehicle floor mat of Iacovelli would be inherently unstable given the configuration of the vehicle floor mat.

To illustrate this, Applicant has annotated Fig. 1 of Iacovelli, as shown below. Even more telling is the annotated perspective view of Fig. 7, also shown below. Therein, given that Iacovelli teaches a vehicle floor mat, the size of the mat is generally well known. Thus, the support rim of three pet bowls A, B, C varying in size to correspond with those commonly in use are shown in placed on Iacovelli's mat.

A pet bowl placed anywhere on the vehicle floor mat of Iacovelli, regardless of size, would not be restrained by the ridges, protrusions and bumps because they are not sized and spaced to restrain a bowl in a plurality of non-dedicated locations.

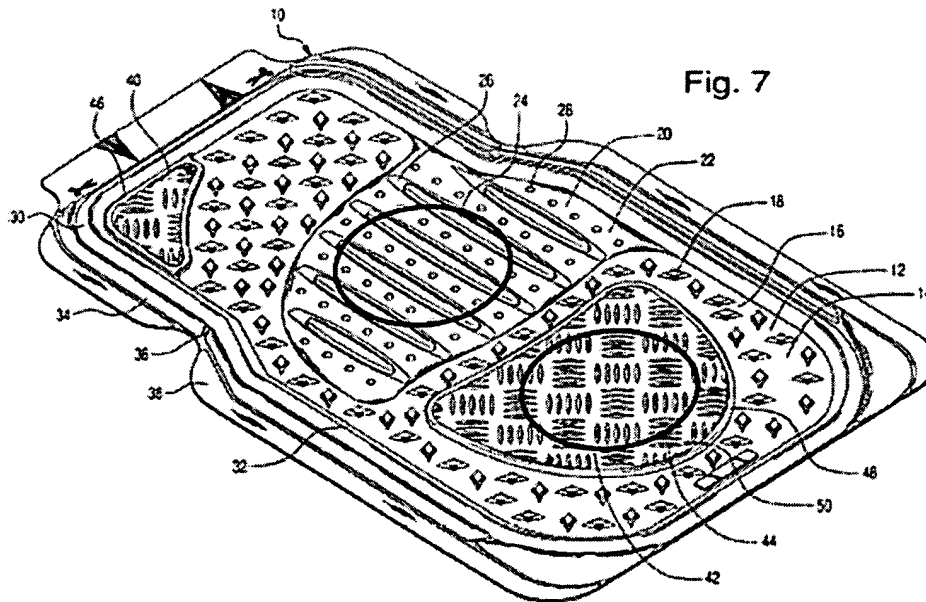
For example, a bowl placed in the upper right hand corner, even a small bowls such as bowl A, would rest unstably on a combination of the surface of the mat, on some diamond shaped protrusions 18 and on some raised ridges 24. A larger bowl such as a bowl B or C would be in an even more unstable position and not be restrained as presently claimed. Resting on surrounding wall 46, diamond shaped protrusions 18, and raised longitudinal and crisscrossing ridges 24, 44, the bowl would slide when a pet ate from the bowl and would not be restrained, because the mat of Iacovelli does not include bumps that are sized and spaced to restrain a bowl in a plurality of non-dedicated locations.

Placing a bowl elsewhere on the mat taught by Iacovelli does not result in a bowl that is restrained by a plurality of bumps in a plurality of non-dedicated locations. Placing a bowl at the lower right hand corner results in a similar problem. A pet bowl of any size would rest on raised surrounding wall 48, which by its contiguous nature would cause the bowl to be tipped with respect to its other places of support. When the bowl is unfortunate to be also placed on the area comprising diamond shaped protrusions 18, the bowl may rest on those protrusions as well as on the wall. This causes the bowl to be unstable and not be restrained as claimed.



Even when a small bowl is placed in one uniform area, Iacovelli fails to teach, disclose, or suggest the claimed structure. As shown below, a small bowl placed in the second area 20 or in the heel plate 42 would be support on but not restrained by the raised longitudinal ridges or by the raised crisscrossing ridges. In fact, in area 20 bumps 28 appear not to even be in contact with the rim support of the bowl since the ridges are significantly higher than the bumps.

In both areas, area 20 and heel plate 46, the bowl is in fact raised above the surface of the mat. A pet eating aggressively would likely move the bowl in the area until it is off the mat or is tipped over.



The missing teachings are not filled by Lampe. Lampe teaches pet food dish with an insert held by side walls. Therein, Lampe fails to teach, disclose, or suggest any of the claimed structure and in particular the claimed arrangement of bumps to restrain a bowl in a plurality of non-dedicated locations.

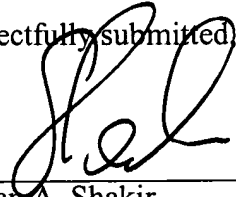
The Examiner is accordingly respectfully requested to withdraw all rejections.

All dependent claims are allowable for at least the same reasons as the independent claims from which they depend.

An earnest effort has been made to be fully responsive to the Examiner's objections. Passage of this case to allowance is earnestly solicited. However, if for any reason the Examiner should consider this application not to be in condition for allowance, he is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned attorney at the number listed below prior to issuing a further Action.

Any fee due with this paper, including any extension fee necessary, may be charged on Deposit Account 50-1290.

Respectfully submitted,



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